

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing a metalized image on a sheet material for protecting special products printed on a sheet material against counterfeit, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) applying a solution containing a salt of a metal onto the sheet material and impregnating the sheet material with the solution;

(b) exposing the sheet material at specified points to laser radiation pulses so as to deposit causing extraction of the metal from the solution at the specified points of the sheet material within its thickness, thereby metalizing the specified points of the sheet material with the deposited material to form by applying electromagnetic radiation to the sheet material at the specified points; and forming the a metalized image from a combination of metalized specified points.

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the extraction deposition of the metal from the solution is provided by focusing the laser electromagnetic radiation pulses on the specified points of a surface of the sheet material.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, wherein the ~~electromagnetic~~ laser radiation pulses reduce, in the solution, metal ions to the metal and deposit the metal at the specified points of the sheet material.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, limiting duration and energy of the ~~electromagnetic~~ laser radiation pulses to values at which the laser radiation is unable to burn the sheet material through.

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim ~~[[4]]~~ 1, comprising forming channels in the sheet material under impact of the electromagnetic laser radiation pulses, and depositing the metal from the solution at the bottom of the channels to form the image from the combination of the metalized points imbedded into the body of the sheet material.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising preparing a solution in which salts of several metals are present, and depositing simultaneously all the metals from the solution at each of the specified points of the sheet material, and thereby forming either metal alloys or doped metals at the metalized specified points.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for ~~applying~~ producing a metalized image onto a sheet material for protecting special products printed on the sheet material against counterfeit, the apparatus comprising:

(a) a device positioned in front of the sheet material for applying a solution containing a salt of a metal onto the sheet material and for impregnating the sheet material with the solution; and

(b) a device for ~~fixing the metal to~~ exposing the sheet material to laser radiation pulses at specified points;

wherein the device (a) ~~for applying the metal onto the sheet material~~ comprises a reservoir with ~~[[a]] the solution containing a salt of the metal~~ and a fixture for transferring the solution from the reservoir to the sheet material and impregnating the sheet material with the solution, and

wherein the device (b) ~~for fixing the metal to the sheet material~~ comprises a generator of the laser radiation pulses and a unit for focusing the laser radiation pulses on the specified points of the sheet material to ~~extract~~ deposit the metal at the specified points of the sheet material within its thickness from the solution impregnated into the sheet material.